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SUBJECT: DASHKEVICH TRIAL ENDS IN CONVICTION, FINE

Ref: Minsk 926

11. (SBU) Political prisoner and "Malady Front" leader Dmitriy Dashkevich's trial on charges of failure to give evidence in a criminal investigation ended November 9 with a conviction and a fine of 1.86 million BYR (865 USD). While the trial was closed to the public again, Ministry of Interior and penal colony officials did permit an observer from the local OSCE office to attend the proceedings.

12. (SBU) Dashkevich's lawyer, Aleksandr Galiyev, told Poloff that while he found the charges baseless and had hoped for his client's acquittal, the conviction and fine represented a better outcome than he had feared (reftel). Galiyev told Poloff that while he was pleased Dashkevich's prison term was not extended, he nevertheless intends to appeal this new sentence. According to Galiyev Dashkevich's release is expected in March 2008.

Stewart